

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager



Letter to Commission No. 082-2004

To: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

Date: April 9, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Subject: **Concurrency**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jorge", written over the word "Concurrency" in the subject line.

The City is currently undertaking a review of its Comprehensive Plan through the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process. The process is intended to identify major issues of importance to the City. Issues related to transportation congestion, and to development and density will be among the most important concerns facing the City. As we begin this process, special focus will be placed on examining the City's Concurrency policies, in order to address the impacts of future development on the traffic circulation and infrastructure needs of Miami Beach.

The City Commission and the Administration started to examine the concurrency issue in depth beginning over a year ago. The Ad Hoc Concurrency Committee was appointed to look into the City's concurrency system and to make recommendations to the City Commission. The City's Planning Board has also begun to make a preliminary view of the concurrency system. Since then, several steps have been taken by the Commission and the Administration to address the most immediate concerns identified.

- An exemption for small businesses which generate less than 100 vehicle trips per day was enacted by the City Commission.
- The City no longer charges applicants an administrative fee when it is determined that there is no net impact from the proposed project upon the City's roadway network.
- The Concurrency Management review function has been moved out of the Public Works Department and into the Planning Department, in order to streamline the review function and make the application process more convenient.

The Ad-Hoc Concurrency Committee, with the assistance of City staff, has studied the concurrency system in depth and has come to a conclusion regarding possible steps the City should take. The Committee has voted to recommend the following four proposals to the City Commission:

1. Support a Regional Traffic Study involving the examination of traffic flows throughout the barrier island region, including adjacent municipalities such as Surfside, Bal Harbor, Sunny Isles Beach, and perhaps even Hallandale and Hollywood in Broward County. This study would establish the traffic flows of commuters using Miami Beach as a cut-through to downtown Miami from further north. The study could make recommendations that may help divert traffic to I-95 through other corridors, as well as focus on development trends in other municipalities which may have negative effects on the regional roadway network.
2. Support a City-wide Transportation Master Plan which would examine traffic flows within Miami Beach, paying special attention to the serious "choke-points" which are causing the most trouble for traffic circulation. Such a master plan would go beyond the Municipal Mobility Plan (MMP) to focus more on improving traffic movement or traffic flow, where possible, and specifically addressing possible improvements to the identified "choke-points".
3. Explore the concept of a Major Development Project Review Process as an alternative to the current system of traffic concurrency. Such a system is used by other municipalities, for example in Miami, and would seek to ensure that developments over a certain threshold are assessed an appropriate fee that would defray the impacts such projects have on the City's infrastructure. Integrate the Transportation Master Plan and the Major Development Review concept into the City's Comprehensive Plan during the upcoming Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process.
4. Evaluate the current practice of granting credits for the proximity of transit facilities to proposed developments when calculating concurrency impact fees. While state law specifies that credits are to be granted for bus routes and circulator transit routes, the state mandated credits granted appear to be out of proportion to the actual number of transit riders associated with large development projects. Explore how a major development project review process (#3 above) could assess impact fees on projects exceeding certain thresholds, without applying credit for transit facilities in such a blanket manner.

The Planning Board has also held discussions regarding the concurrency system and has recommended that the City Commission urgently address the issues as soon as possible.

The next two months, during the City's EAR process, will be a particularly good time to discuss these issues in a variety of forums. The City has scheduled several citizen meetings, and meetings will be held with the Planning Board and City Commission, as well as scoping meetings with the staff of several State and local agencies such as the South Florida Regional Planning Council, the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Miami-Dade County and adjacent local municipalities.

We expect to be able to make progress on addressing the major issues of concern to the City, and to especially focus on solutions that will address the long-term planning concerns regarding transportation congestion and future development.

If you have any questions relative to this matter, or require additional information, please contact me.


JMG:CMC:JGG:RGL

c: Christina Cuervo, Assistant City Manager
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